

Roman gate closed after bits of ancient stone fall off

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Locals have long complained about the state of monuments and roads in the capital.

Rome's ruins are such an integral part of the Eternal City that it can be surprising when sometimes bits of them fall off.

Nobody was hurt after a few fragments fell early Tuesday morning from the Porta Maggiore gate, whose monumental double arches once provided a gateway through the third-century Aurelian Walls.

But the monument—which originally supported two of the city's aqueducts and is now located behind Rome's main train station—was temporarily closed off while it was checked, according to a statement from the city authorities.

The fragments of tufa—a type of easy-to-cut rock used in Roman-era construction—fell off around 6:15 am, landing on a pavement "without causing any damage to people or things", it said.

"At first glance, there does not seem to be any further damage," said the statement, which added that "the overall state of conservation of the [monument](#) is good".

Normal pedestrian and [road traffic](#) was not affected.

Residents have long complained about the state of monuments and roads in the [city](#), which draws millions of tourists each year to see such wonders as the Colosseum.

"We really need maintenance here in Rome," said Veronica Rinaldin, 33, who works near the Porta Maggiore, which is often marred by overgrown weeds and garbage.



City officials said they had closed off the monument for inspection.

A [police officer](#) told AFP on condition of anonymity that tufa provided an excellent base for certain plants to grow, and their roots often split the stone.

"It doesn't happen often. It happens if they are abandoned and neglected," the officer said.

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